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From *Land of the Veda.*

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JOEL T. JANVIER

The First Native Preacher of Our Church in India.

BY REV. WM. BUTLER, D.D.

AS I passed through Allahabad in the fall of 1856, on my way to open a mission for the Methodist Episcopal Church in Oudh and Rohilkund, we were entertained by the Presbyterian missionaries, who welcomed us most warmly as fellow-workers in the great task of conquering India for Christ. The topic of an interpreter and helper for the beginning of our Mission was discussed, and the Presbyterian brethren consented to give me a young man who had been trained as a teacher and who had a fair knowledge of English. Joel was called, and after the matter was presented declared his willingness to go to the new field, about 300 miles to the northwest,

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almost as foreign to him as India to our workers. The only point at which a difficulty arose was whether his wife's mother, a widow, would allow her daughter to go so far away from her. In *The Land of the Veda* I have tried to describe the pathetic scene when I went with Joel to ask for this permission. The poor woman, with the tears running down her face, exclaimed, "The Saviour came down from heaven to give himself for me, and why should I not give my daughter to his work?"

This, the first gift from the heart of a native woman to our Mission, has proven to be a valuable one. Joel's religion at this time was largely a matter of training and intellectual belief, but as I explained to him the witness of the Holy Spirit, and he read William Carvosso's life, he soon came to see its necessity and to seek what he had not. Before long he found it and became a joyful Christian. For forty years he has been faithful, and now, in his old age, is a father beloved in the North India Conference. His gentle Christian spirit in dealing with questioning Hindus and Mohammedans has tended to disarm criticism and to win them for Christ. During the days of the mutiny he and his wife, amid great

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peril, kept their faith, and at the reopening of the work he joined me and became the first native preacher. One of the most interesting events of my return to India in 1884 was my meeting with Joel. His sight, which had been failing for some time, had completely gone a short time before, and his greatest grief in regard to this affliction was that it deprived him of the pleasure of looking again upon the face of his old superintendent. It was at the camp meeting at Chandausi, and I arrived at the tent just as he was leading the large congregation in prayer. At the conclusion I stepped up, and, putting my hand on his shoulder, "Dear Joel!" That was enough, and in an instant we were clasped in each other's arms, the whole audience in tears of sympathy with our joy.

Joel is now superannuated, living at Bareilly, near the large native church. A recent letter from him is of such interest that I have been asked to share part of it with the large circle of friends of our India work. His son, who writes for him, is struggling to complete his college education. I give it just as he writes it in English, without any correction:

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MY DEAR DR. BUTLER:

To write you a letter to you has been the long-thought-for idea which held its sway so supremely over a mind so closely connected with that, which in spite of so great and interminable a distance is always so deeply interested in the affairs of one with whom for so many weary years the harmonious work of our Saviour was triumphantly carried on, with that energy which is the result of the direct help of the Almighty in cases where-with he intends to manifest his own divine will to have the predominating power over every heart.

You are, my dear doctor, to your great joy well aware of the increasing condition of our Mission work in India. . . . It is almost useless to talk about the difficulties and troubles we had to undergo when our Mission was a babe in our bosom, for to our great joy we now see it a grown-up child, a living soul. The desire of eating the fruits of a garden, the longing for obtaining the gifts of labor, is by nature given as the lot of every man. The discoverer longs to remain to rule the land he has had the courageous foresight to discover, the inventor wishes to have the prerogative of the use of the thing invented, and it is a boon for a man to see a thing flourishing, the arduous beginning of which rested for some time over his skill and intelligence. So it is with you. The Lord God of hosts has so kindly given us the opportunity of seeing this widespread work consecrated for his own divine will. May God abundantly bless you to live and enjoy this privilege. . . .

Though weak and feeble, worn down by the furious waves of the unfathomable ocean of time, pressed under the hard rock of anxiety, and dragged by the furious currents of calamity and sore trouble; still continually examining my life, still burning for the holy faith, still lurking patiently, shouting for victory and the kingdom of God, and thus strengthened by the divine help, I

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readily find solace and comfort and excessive joy in him, and led to the pulpit at my turn occasionally raise my voice, trembling and feeble, to the throne of the most high eternal God. I do not boast, but I thank my God, from whom cometh all help, that he brings out precious pearls to shine for his glory out of this sightless mechanism preaching in the old Civil Lines pulpit. . . .

I long to see all of you, but, alas! this my desire cannot be accomplished; but God has given us a heart to love each other affectionately as long as we live in this world, and that love which is a part of that unfathomable love of our Creator and Father is not at all lessened, nor is its fire quenched, with the thought of long and tiresome distance. The bond of love once connected with closer ties cannot be broken by the lengthening chain; the dales and valleys and the azure main have no power to detract the efficacy of the immortal love. Though we don't see each other, let us continue this affection as we grow older in the grace of our Redeemer. I journey from this part of the world, and you from the other, but our goal and destination is the same: sooner or later we must see each other face to face.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless and keep you is the prayer of your loving and affectionate brother in Christ,

JOEL T. JANVIER.

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